



Could I have diabetes



There are three commonly diagnosed variations of diabetes mellitus. These are referred to as type 1, type 2 and gestational diabetes.

This leaflet will explain the differences between type 1 and type 2 diabetes mellitus.

Type 1 Diabetes

Risk Factors:

None, but there is a slightly higher risk if a parent or a sibling has type 1 diabetes or if autoimmune diseases (i.e. rheumatoid arthritis, pernicious anaemia) run in the family.

Signs and Symptoms:

- Extreme, unquenchable thirst.
- Greatly increased urination (small children who have been dry at night may start wetting the bed again).
- Unexpected, inexplicable and often severe weight loss.
- Extreme tiredness.
- Strange odour on the breath.
- Blurred vision.
- Lethargy.
- Irritability.
- Confusion.
- Loss of consciousness eventually leading to coma.

These signs and symptoms usually become apparent over a relatively short time frame. This could be days to weeks in children but may be weeks to months in adults.

Type 1 diabetes is not preventable and has no cure.

It is a disease caused by the person's autoimmune system, damaging the cells of their pancreas so they no longer make insulin. Insulin injections are necessary to stay alive.

If you have these signs and symptoms it is important to see your general practitioner immediately. If you cannot do so, please go to the emergency department of your local hospital.

Type 2 Diabetes

Risk Factors

- Being over 45 years old and having a family history (parent, grandparent, sibling) of type 2 diabetes.
- Having impaired glucose tolerance (IGT) or impaired fasting glucose (IFG).
- Having high blood pressure, high cholesterol or heart disease.
- Being over 45 years old and overweight.
- Being over 35 years old and coming from a background such as Asian, Aboriginal, Pacific Islander or from the Indian sub-continent.
- Being over 55 years old.
- Being depressed.
- Being a woman who had gestational diabetes in pregnancy or a baby weighing over 4Kg.
- Being a woman who has polycystic ovarian syndrome and being overweight.

If you have any of these risk factors, see your General Practitioner every year for a diabetes check.

Signs and symptoms

In the early stages people may have no symptoms and are surprised when their doctor picks up diabetes on routine screening.

Sometimes the symptoms develop so slowly, over months to years, that the person may become used to feeling under par and not realise there is anything wrong until they have a heart attack, stroke or foot ulcer.

Classic symptoms may include some, or all, of the following:

- Increased thirst.
- Increased urination.
- Increased tiredness and lethargy.
- Blurred vision.
- Itchiness.
- Irritability.
- Slow healing cuts and infections.
- Muscle cramps.
- Increased appetite or change of appetite.
- Weight gain may occur.

If you have any of these symptoms please see your general practitioner for a diabetes check.

Diabetes TASMANIA is an independent organisation providing education and support services to Tasmanians living with diabetes as well as to their family and carers. Our activities include diabetes education camps for children and young adults with type 1 diabetes. We also conduct a variety of awareness and educational campaigns aimed at improving the health outcomes for people with diabetes as well as those who are at risk. There are currently an estimated 45,000 Tasmanians who have diabetes yet only 23,000 have been diagnosed. Early diagnosis means that the correct management of the disease can be effected, which in turn means that intervention to reduce the health complications associated with diabetes can be implemented. We value the support that individuals and organisations provide to assist us in our important role.



Diabetes TASMANIA

together we can turn diabetes around

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